

## The Defence of the Faith

### MIRACLES ARE FACT, NOT FANCY.

A favorite plan of attack with the old avowed infidelity was to deny the reality and the possibility of miracles. Along this line of controversy the friends and foes of Christianity contended. Scepticism has devised more insidious methods of late, and under the guise of patronizing and interpreting the Scriptures assumes to ingeniously explain away the miraculous element that appears in particular Biblical statements. As one of many instances, Dr. Van Dyke, writing in the "Toronto Presbyterian" of Joshua's commanding the sun to stand still, characterizes the narration as "poetry, imagination and heroism," intending thereby, as stated by one of his critics, to deny its historical character.

The reply to every such criticism of the sacred record is that if this plain account of events, as they are said to have transpired, is only imagination, then all events which are described as supernatural may be assigned to the same class, because the only reason for denying them is that they cannot be explained upon natural grounds.

The very idea of a miracle is that it is something superior to the processes of ordinary laws. When we come to apply the test to the cardinal facts of redemption we are confronted with the same alternatives of accepting the statements of revelation, or rejecting them because they cannot be explained by our knowledge of natural law. The incarnation of Christ is one of these facts. The unity of Deity and humanity in the person of Jesus must be accepted, not because we can explain it, but because we are taught it.

The fact of the resurrection presents the same alternatives. This is the crown and culmination of all miracle. Upon this, as a fact, inspiration bases its claim to our confidence in the entire redemptive work of our Lord. Yet this fact is as difficult of explanation as is the fact that the sun stood still upon Gibeon. The miraculous element in either case constitutes the essential value of the narrative, and the record would be meaningless and impotent if its statements were only imaginary and poetic. It is difficult to refrain from suspecting of this class of interpreters the tendency and purpose to have as little as possible of the divine immanence and control in the affairs of men, and to exalt as much as possible their own personalities as modern Daniels come to judgment.

A similar, though more pronounced, case is mentioned and commented on by an exchange, and in such terse and withering terms as the following:

"There has come from the Chicago University Press another attack upon the miracles of the Bible by a learned professor in a Michigan college. He looks wise and says that there was no need of miracles. Then he looks wiser and declares that some miracles are incredible. The trouble with the professor is that he has not yet accepted the first verse of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' If he believed in a God great enough to create the universe he would find no difficulty in believing that such a God could stop the revolution of the earth for twenty-four hours, turn water into wine, multiply loaves and fishes, or do anything else that he might choose to do. It is a pity that learning should so dwarf a man's conception of God. It is a pauperizing process.

"It ought to be said that these unbelieving professors do

not altogether represent the institutions to which they belong. There are other professors in their faculties of equal or superior learning who believe in the miracles in the Bible, but the man who jumps overboard from an Atlantic steamer attracts more attention than a thousand other passengers who remain on deck and behave themselves. There is no real conflict between the Bible and up-to-date learning. The conflict is between the Bible and the unbelief of certain professors who imagine that the modern scientific spirit is opposed to faith in a personal God still at work in this world. They are waging war against the facts recorded in the Bible and confirmed by the reason of a man who believes in a God of almighty power and infinite wisdom. In the last analysis it is a conflict between gods, the great God revealed in the Bible, and the little gods born in the brains of learned unbelievers."

### EVOLUTION.

Mr. George Paulin, formerly an avowed evolutionist, has written a book entitled, "No Struggle for Existence" in which he renounces his once cherished philosophy. His renunciation appears in such statements as these quoted from its pages:

"I must, in all honesty, confess that logically, as the matter presents itself to my mind, the argument is in favor of those who believe in the doctrine of special creations as our fathers believed it. After having believed in evolution for many years, my studies have convinced me it is a mistake, and I have been reluctantly brought to admit that the Christian doctrine of creation is more in accordance with the facts of nature than is the theory of evolution.

We have ever believed that the self-respect of humanity and the upward reach of the soul for better things would consign evolution to the haunts of the class of theorists and adventurers who are pleased to bewilder curious and credulous minds with crude imaginings, and who reject faith in a Creator and the hope of immortality.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." The proper place to get the word of God is in the heart. It must come by the ear of the head, but it must not stop there. It must get into that part of man which controls and determines his life. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." It is not what a man knows or what a man thinks that shapes him, but what he loves. He believes in the thing he likes. He does the thing that he inclines to do, and the inclination is in the heart, not in the head. The heart rules the head and makes it see what it pleases. The entrance of God's word into the heart, therefore, is carrying that word to the centre of man's being, the springs of his life. Hidden there it affects the character, determines the will, shapes the life. It elevates and ennobles the soul. It gives permanence and character and grace and development. David's hiding the word in his heart was in order to his avoiding sinning against God. The word in one's head may correct one's views, provided always the heart consents, but it will not correct one's affections, appetencies, or desires. The word in the heart goes to the root of things. It corrects the very sources of the life. Hiding it in the heart means taking it in so deeply that it reaches the innermost recesses.

If conscience smite thee once, it is admonition; if twice, it is condemnation.—Anon.